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SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (9/17): "ONE NATIONAL VISION AND ONE NATIONAL ADDRESS THAT PLACES THE INTEREST OF THE PEOPLE ABOVE ALL OTHERS."

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Main Stories:  
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The September 16 meeting between Palestinian Authority President Abbas and Israeli Premier Olmert receives highlighted coverage in all dailies. Front-page pictures show the two leaders shaking hands. Leading with the story, Al-Quds reports that Abbas, "expressed disappointment," over Israel's, "failure to meet its commitments." The report also quotes Palestinian negotiator Sa'eb Erekat noting that the meeting was held in accordance with understandings reached at Annapolis that any agreement must be based on resolving all final-status issues. The paper notes that Israeli Foreign Minister Livni did not attend the meeting, citing her activities involving Kadima Party elections. Coverage on Israeli Kadima Party elections does make the front pages, but reporting is not detailed nor highlighted.

An Al-Quds' front page story quotes Palestinian negotiator Ahmad Quray stating that negotiations with Israel are difficult but have not reached the point where parties must compromise. He explains that any negotiations that start with compromises cannot succeed and that Palestinian ambitions, "are not subject to compromise."

Armed clashes on September 16 between Hamas and the powerful Gaza Daghmash clan garner prominent coverage in the dailies. Al-Ayyam leads with the news, noting that clashes lasted for many hours and included the launching of rockets. All papers report that 11 people, including two children, were killed. In other Gaza news, Al-Quds reports that Khaled Abu Arafih, a Jerusalem resident and minister in the former Hamas government, was released by Israel on September 16, after 27-months of detention.

Citing unidentified Israeli security sources, Al-Ayyam reports on its front page that the U.S., Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA) are discussing a plan to replicate the security model implemented in Janin, in other West Bank cities. The report states that, while the PA would like Hebron to be the next city, Israel prefers the northern border town of Tulkarm. In related front page coverage, Al-Ayyam runs a story on the recent World Bank report that states that the Palestinian Authority has made great progress in its reform and development efforts and in imposing the rule of law in parts of the West Bank. The report includes implied criticism of Israel's "limited" improvement of Palestinian freedom of movement, the paper notes.

The dailies continue front-page coverage of the global financial crisis, running wire stories that highlight concerns over the possible collapse of the major U.S. insurance company AIG.

A September 16 meeting between U.S. Commerce officials in Ramallah and Palestinian representatives of the IT sector gets prominent coverage on all dailies' economic pages. The reports state that the visiting International Trade Agency desk officer and Foreign Commercial Service officer discussed challenges facing Palestinian information and communications technology infrastructure. Separate articles carry coverage on the US Trade and Development Agency signing ceremony also held in Ramallah on September 16, in which USTDA awarded a local IT company a \$412,093 grant to help establish

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the first commercial Internet data center in the West Bank.

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BLOCK QUOTES:  
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¶1. Al-Quds independent writes in its main editorial entitled "Cairo Dialogue is an Opportunity Not to Be Wasted" (09/17): "Fatah and Hamas, or more precisely, the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian Government in Gaza, should benefit from this [one-time] opportunity. Dialogue should place the interests of Palestine and its people above those of the personal, party and factional nature... the will of the people [should be consulted since they] suffer from the consequences of the disputes and internal division that is deepening with each passing day... What we need, especially from Hamas, is more flexibility in dealing with the Egyptian proposals and what we hope to get from Egypt, is the opening of the Rafah crossing, because the citizens of Gaza Strip are Palestinians above all else, and because the majority [of Gazans] are not politicized, nor belong to any faction. They want to live in dignity and be allowed to travel freely like people in the rest of the world. The Palestinian people want a responsible, constructive dialogue in Cairo and are following developments closely, expecting positive results. This is the message that the Palestinian people are sending to the leadership of Fatah and Hamas."

¶2. Columnist Mohammad Allush opines in official Al-Hayat Al-Jadida under the title, "Negotiations and Resistance... New Similarities" (09/17): "[Palestinians]... are witnessing an unprecedented state of division that was further deepened by the Hamas coup in the Gaza Strip... It is essential that national unity be restored since our main confrontation should now be with Israel. We need to mobilize the peoples' energy in the political, social and institutional arenas, and re-engage popular resistance [against] the occupation and its racist policies. We need to conduct political resistance in all its forms, as the situation allows... we have to strive to make national dialogue a success... we must look for similarities between the resistance and negotiations, and develop one national vision and one national address that places the interest of the people above all others."

WALLES